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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 STOCKHOLM 000752

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/07/2018
TAGS: [EAID](#) [MCAP](#) [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [AF](#) [SW](#)
SUBJECT: SWEDEN LIKELY TO UP ISAF TROOPS BY 100; BILL
DELAYED UNTIL MID-NOVEMBER;

Classified By: A/DCM Marc Koehler for reasons 1.4 (B) & (D).

¶1. (C) Summary: Sweden has once again delayed the submission of its ISAF authorization bill to Parliament to November 17-19, citing "differences in interpretation of the wording" as the main problem. Sweden is discussing raising the number of troops in Afghanistan from 375 to around 500, by sending a C-130, medevac helicopters, support crews, and additional maneuver elements. Sweden has earmarked 15-20 percent of its \$60 million in aid (2007) for the four northern provinces, but admitted that locals in the North were seeing very little of this due to bottlenecks in Kabul. Sweden would like to increase the number of civilian advisors to improve development in the North. End Summary.

SECURITY SITUATION

¶2. (C) On November 4, MOD civilian staff, including Deputy Director Johanna Gardmark and Desk Officers Victoria Hjort and Cecilia Helander, and LTCOL Claes Bitterlich briefed Emboffs on Sweden's civilian and military commitment to Afghanistan. Helander stated that security has deteriorated somewhat in the North, but that the situation was "stable." She cited criminal activities, ethnic disputes, corruption, drug smuggling, local power-brokers, opposition to the central government, and an insurgent attack on two NGO personnel in Mazar-e-Sharif in February as the major challenges.

ISAF AUTHORIZATION BILL DELAYED (AGAIN)

¶3. (C) Hjort informed us that the draft ISAF extension bill, originally scheduled to have been submitted to Parliament in October and then rescheduled to early November, has been delayed yet again. She cited interdepartmental "differences in interpreting the wording" of the draft text as the primary delay, but could not give us a date for submission. Separately, MFA officials offered that the bill could be submitted November 17-19. The existing authorization expires December 20. Separately, MFA contacts told POL Counselor that the differences are now being discussed between the state secretaries (i.e., deputies) in the MFA and Defense Ministry and relate to the specific number of civilian advisors and military maneuver elements to be authorized. Despite the delay, Helander commented that Sweden has contributed to ISAF since 2001 and emphasized that Sweden has a "long-term" commitment to Afghanistan.

¶4. (C) As regards the proposed new bill, Helander said Sweden

is discussing increasing the authorized troop ceiling, currently 600, and press reports cite military sources as indicating that the new bill might include language authorizing up to 800 troops. But these figures represent permitted upper limits, allowing the Swedes to "surge" troops to Afghanistan in the event of an "emergency," according to MOD and MFA contacts. The actual number of troops on the ground now is roughly 375, and the actual troop increase being considered is roughly 100, to operate a C-130, medevac helicopters, and possibly additional maneuver elements to supplement the one-rifle brigade currently deployed. Of the above, only the C-130 would not have "geographical caveats" and be authorized to operate nationwide. Helander noted that Sweden also wants to provide more military mentors to support OMLTs working with the Afghan National Army (ANA); there is apparently some discussion about geographical caveats for these troops, though MOD and MFA are urging that they be allowed to operate wherever their ANA trainees go.

CIVILIAN-MILITARY COOPERATION

15. (C) Hjort stated that the military-civilian cooperation works smoothly in the field, but is "hampered" by bureaucracy in Sweden. She cited the lack of a "comprehensive strategy" as a problem for Sweden. Hjort told us Sweden has established an "inter-agency" group consisting of the Ministry of Justice, MFA, MOD, SIDA, desk officers, Swedish Armed Forces and the Swedish Rescue Service to be led by the MFA. She opined that the new group would meet weekly to ensure that "everyone is on the same page" and be able to

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make quick decisions without needing Parliamentary approval.

16. (C) Hjort confirmed that Sweden has earmarked 15-20 percent of its \$60 million in aid (2007) for the four northern provinces, but admitted that locals in the North were seeing very little of this. She stated that the Swedish Embassy and SIDA are examining why the funds are being held up in Kabul. Hjort opined that Sweden would like to send more civilian advisors to the North to improve development, adding that this would require greater logistical support on the ground.

17. (C) Comment: SIDA's reported refusal to work with or near Swedish troops in the North presents a problem. Without adequate protection, civilian development advisors may find it difficult to travel in some of the more isolated and dangerous areas of the four provinces. Sweden's Alliance government and most opposition parties say they support Sweden's long-term commitment to Afghanistan, but should security continue to deteriorate and Swedish casualties (only two to date) increase, public support might plunge. End Comment.

BACKGROUND

18. (SBU) In 2006, Sweden became the lead nation for the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) headquartered in Mazar-e-Sharif that is responsible for the provinces of Balkh, Samangan, Jowzjan, and Sar-e-Pul. The PRT has a total of 500 people in Afghanistan, which includes roughly 370 Swedish and nearly 100 Finnish troops, and two civilian advisors (one political and one development). Military forces are based at Camp Northern Lights in Mazar-e-Sharif (MAZAR), a Norwegian field hospital, Military Observer Teams (MOTs) in Samangan, Jowzjan, and Sar-e-Pul provinces, and a National Intelligence Cell in Kabul. Sweden also provides soldiers to two OMLTs based out of Camp Mike Spann, about 12 kilometers from Mazar-e-Sharif.

WOOD